

Benevolent Congregational Church
300 Weybosset Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-210

An addendum to
Benevolent Congregational Church
Weybosset Street, Providence, Rhode Island
in HABS Catalog (1941)

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
110-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Address: 300 Weybosset Street, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island

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An addendum to
Beneficent Congregational Church
Weybosset Street, Providence, Rhode Island
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Present Owner: Beneficent Congregational Society

Present Occupant: Beneficent Congregational Church

Present Use: Church

Brief Statement
of Significance: This large building is the second meeting house
of the second Congregational Church organized in
Providence. This church is the oldest on the west
side of the Providence River, both in organization
and age of its meeting house.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Beneficent Congregational Society
2. Date of erection: 1809, dedicated January 1, 1810.
3. Architect, builder, suppliers, etc: James Wilson, an Irish immigrant and formerly a Dublin cabinetmaker, was pastor at the time of the construction, and may have helped design the church. Plans drawn by Barnard Eddy, and John Newman who supervised the construction. Carpentry contract with James Aborn. Masonry contract with Asa and Smith Bosworth
4. Original Plans, construction, etc.: The original contracts (see supplemental material) and the existing fabric of the building indicate several original features of the building that have been changed. The original drum of the dome, which is in place just within the present drum, was octagonal, with slightly recessed diagonal sides with windows, clapboarded, and separated from the dome by a molded, bracketed cornice. The original cupola on the dome was octagonal, containing a bell, and surmounted by a weather vane and ball. The original contract mentions a "vanation" window on both the north and south walls of the church. All traces of the south

window were removed when the present chancel was added; the north window is closed, but its location is visible in the patched brickwork. The original contract called for a projecting porch with four columns, but the columns were to be only 2' in diameter, half the size of the present ones, and presumably the entire design of the existing portico dates from the 1836 alterations. According to the contract, apparently the original roof balustrade was an open one made up of newels and posts. The original interior columns were smooth, and the present fluting, which is made up of thin, narrow boards, is probably fastened over the original columns.

5. Notes on alterations and additions: The following notes on the history of the fabric are extracted from a booklet available in the church titled: Historic Beneficent Meeting House, 1810:

"In 1836 James Bucklin was called upon to make extensive refinements to bring out a more authentic Greek design. Mrs. Antoinette Downing has written,

" 'It is James Bucklin's distinguished interior that we see today. It is one of the most important Greek Revival interiors in the state. The exterior was also trimmed with Greek detail. Our magnificent Greek Revival portico which now has been restored to its original platform was probably James Bucklin's design. The Greek detail of the windows was added over the old simple stone lintels of the 1809 building. The original clapboarded base of the dome may still be seen if you climb the stairs into the turret. It was masked with a superimposed structure which also has Greek detail and was designed to cut the original effect of height that the shingled dome had. The detail for the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens was probably added at the time of James Bucklin's working on the building replacing the old lantern of about the same height.*

"As part of the interior change under Bucklin the fluted pillars replaced plain columns. In the interest of comfort the backs of the pews were slanted as is visible along the side walls to this day.

"The original meeting house was contained within the wall which is seen at the wing pews; the first organ of 1825 was installed in the rear gallery. Recently the chapel organ has been moved to this spot and will be used as a gallery organ. A happy coincidence is that the rosewood case of the chapel organ is a close replica of the 1825 organ.

"In 1857 the choir area was built over the one-story chapel of 1833 and the second organ installed. At this time the gold leaf along the entablature and the balcony balustrades was used and has never been renewed.

"1923 saw the last major improvements to the Meeting House prior to those of 1939. Steel beams were added to the ancient oak timbers to assure safety and increased life. The present organ was installed as the gift of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in memory of Mrs. Rockefeller's mother, Abby Pierce Aldrich. The beautifully carved organ case and pulpit were designed by William Aldrich, Boston architect, brother of Mrs. Rockefeller, and a son of the church.

"1959. As a birthday present to the Meeting House, granite steps were installed and placed in the position occupied by the steps a century ago and from which they had been moved for reasons not plain to us of today. The ancient porch pillars were removed, lengthened and replaced. They were found to be in almost perfect condition; the interior has generally been beautified and returned to its original unity. Modern improvements made over the years have been made as inconspicuous as possible. The new aisle carpeting is a copy of the carpet used for the same purpose a century ago, samples of which were found in some of the pews and on the foot stools. The narthex has been freed from many encumbrances including huge storm house enclosures at the foot of the balcony stairs. In the process, lovely newel posts and moldings were brought to light. John Hutchins Cady has been the architect on the front steps and portico restoration and Mrs. Antoinette Downing has been consultant on all details of the restoration. Mr. Clifford W. Hall of the church has had general oversight of all of the work."

6. Sources of information:

John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 73-75, 160.

Antoinette Forrester Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, 1937), pp. 445, 459, 462, 463.

Federal Writers' Project, Rhode Island, A Guide to the Smallest State (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1937), p. 282.

HABS Inventory prepared by John Hutchins Cady, November 19, 1956.

Talbot Hamlin, Greek Revival Architecture in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1944), p. 183

William R. Staples, Annals of the Town of Providence, From its First Settlement, to the Organization of the City Government in June, 1832, Collection of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Vol. V. (Providence, 1843), pp. 431-432.

Arthur E. Wilson, Paddy Wilson's Meeting-House in Providence Plantations, 1791-1839 (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1950), pp. 144 ff.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The following notes on the history of the Beneficent Congregation are extracted from a pamphlet available in the church titled: Beneficent Congregational Church, Providence, Rhode Island, Gathered 1743. A Brief Historical Sketch, by Mrs Learned Greene:

"...It was the second Congregational Church to be 'gathered' in Providence. Its organization dates from March 7, 1743, when as a result of a demand for a more fervent form of piety about half the membership of the First Congregational Church, at that time under the pastoral care of the Reverend Josiah Cotton, 'withdrew and set up a separate meeting where they attended the exhortation of a lay brother, who had been brought up in the business of house carpentry.'

"The 'lay brother' was Joseph Snow, Jr., destined to be affectionately known for fifty years as 'Father Snow.' It is an oft-told tale that Father Snow led his parishioners out into the forest and cut the timber and that with their own hands they erected that first meeting house in the year 1744 on the very spot where Beneficent Church still stands.

"...Father Snow's old Meeting House was a building 36 x 40 feet with a tall spire which housed a bell imported from England in the year 1760. Nearby was the old burying ground and on the west and to the south were a little group of houses, each with its garden and its low white fence.

"...For many years the old Meeting House was the largest auditorium in the town and in it took place the first five Commencements of Rhode Island College (Brown University) to be held in Providence (1770-1774). In this old church George Whitefield and Bishop Asbury both preached, and during the troublous days of the Revolution it provided a gathering place and a shelter for the weary townspeople.

"The year 1791 was to prove a momentous one for this growing church, for it was in May of that year that a young Irishman named James Wilson landed in Providence after a long and tedious voyage from his native Limerick.

"...It soon became evident, however, that the old Meeting House was quite inadequate, and on January 14th, 1809, the following advertisement appeared in the Providence Gazette: 'The Beneficent Society being about to build a new Meeting House in this town wish to contract with a person or persons to build the same and furnish the materials, the house to be 91 x 75 feet and the outside to be of brick and stone. Those who may wish to undertake the job must apply to the subscriber for a particular description when a draft of the same may be seen.'

"...Music has played no small part in the life of Beneficent Church. Its first organ was installed in the rear gallery in the year 1825 and was bought by voluntary subscription at a cost of \$1,900.

"In 1833 the 'little Chapel' (the present office and Dr. Krom room) had been built as a one-story addition to the south end of the church to care for the growing Sunday School. In this 'little Chapel' Lowell Mason of Boston, the great composer of hymn tunes, conducted a singing school in 1835. In 1857 the upper portion of the south wall was removed and the chancel built above this 'little Chapel.' It was in this newly built chancel that a splendid new organ was placed in this same year, which continued in use until 1923 when the present organ was given by Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in loving memory of Mrs. Rockefeller's mother, Abby Pierce Aldrich, and was placed in the chancel so beautifully remodelled for it. This organ is a three manual Hook and Hastings especially designed by Archer Gibson. The beautifully carved case and chancel were designed by William Aldrich of Boston. At this same time extensive remodelling of the vestry added much to its usefulness as a modern church plant.

"...In 1872, Mr. Steere gave the Memorial Chapel in the rear of the church, in memory of his father, and later installed in the Chapel a Roosevelt organ. The beautiful carved mahogany case of this instrument is a replica of the first organ which stood in the rear gallery of the church. In 1951 the Chestnut Street end of the Chapel was remodelled to afford better church school and parish house facilities. The lovely Austrian crystal chandelier, regarded as one of the finest in this country, was also a gift from Mr. Steere, and was hung in the church in 1890. It contains 5763 separate crystals."

"Ministers of Beneficent Church

1743-1793...Rev. Joseph Snow, Jr.
1791-1839...Rev. James Wilson, M.A.
1837-1845...Rev. Mark Tucker, D.D.
1846-1853...Rev. John P. Cleveland, D.D.
1855-1865...Rev. Alexander H. Clapp, D.D.
1866-1901...Rev. James G. Vose, D.D.
1901-1932...Rev. Asbury Krom, D.D.
1933-...Rev. Arthur E. Wilson, D.D."

C. Supplemental Material

1. Documents relating to the construction of the building

a. Contract with James Aborn, March 1809

These Articles of Agreement made and entered into this seventh day of March A.D. by and between James Aborn of Providence in the County of Providence Merchant as principal and Edward Aborn of said Providence Merchant as surety for the said James Aborn of the one part & the Beneficent Society in said Providence on the other part Witnesseth--That the said James Aborn and Edward Aborn in consideration of the several agreements and promises by said Society on their part herein entered into and made & by them to be kept and performed do hereby agree contract and promise to & with said Society that he the said James Aborn shall and will on his part find and provide for said Society all Good and proper articles fit for erecting completing & finishing a Meeting House which is herein discribed (except what shall be considered as belonging & appertaining to the Masons work on said house and which are named and described in a contract made and entered into between said Society and Asa & Smith-Bosworth bearing date on the 28th day of Feb. last and signed by the said James Aborn) and also do and perform all the work on the same house (masons work excepted) in a good workmanlike manner--And for the better understanding and defining of said agreement the following description & definitions shall be attended to--The House shall be Ninety-one feet Long & Seventy-five feet wide on the out side & Thirty feet high in the /? on the inside from the sills on main floor--A plank partition acrost between the seller & Vestry & entrys as pr. plat. Two Doors in to the seller one from each side entry four feet six inches wide, the entry to have floors laid & sealed up four feet--Three Doors in to the Vestry one from each entry--Three Out side Doors, One into each entry the two side doors to be each four feet six inches wide in two parts and the one on the back end Three feet wide with Glass in the tops of each to lite the

entrys--Posts in the seller & Vestry pr. Plat. Vestry to be sealed up as high as the windows all round to have the floors laid & finished agreeable to plat with seats like the ones in the old house and the Pulpit above in the old house to be put in the Vestry of the new house--at all the doors in the walls to have timber fraims, back of the windows and door gaps to be filled out even with the wall with timber and lintel over them to prevent their leaking---Six Windows in to the Vestry and four in the cellar of Twelve by Ten Glass sixteen lights the fraimes and sash as stoute as those in the Benevolent Congregational Societys Meeting House, those in the seller to have patent springs to the lower sash and those in the Vestry to both--Stairs from the back entry up under the Pulpit in to the house with a Door at the top, the Pulpit as pr. Plat and finished like the one as the said B. C. S. Meeting House (except the carved and fluted work with /? fraimed /? of all Banisters with a Door & Stairs up in to the same, floor raised and nailing round under the same agreeable to said Pulpit. 152 Pews placed as pr. plat with the seats eighteen inches high & fifteen inches wide & the Pews thirty eight inches high from the floor of the Pews to the top of the railing which is to be round of bunch stained the Pews to be raised, Doors hung with brass, butts, strip for hats, buttons & finished in every other part like the said B.C.S. Meeting house without draws, the floors of the Pews to be of white pine and the Aisles & Entry's all over the house of Spruce the boards not to exceed seven inches in width all the floors in the Building to be laid Double--Three inside front Doors in two parts against the Isles pr. Plat the middle one five feet & the Out side over four feet wide. Thirty Windows on the main floor and Gallery of twenty four light twelve by ten glass the fraims and sash as stout as they are in the said B.C.S. Meeting house to hang double with leads on /? & a /? in the Middle like them to have a Molding nailed on round the fraims on the Out side and a caising, and a caising nailed on in front of the wall round the windows on the inside, two Vanation windows one front & the other at the Pulpit like the one in the house built by Capt. James Munro in Westminister Street the sash's being like the other windows & screws & same size glass, all the glass in said house to be of the best Boston Manufacturers, a blind to the Vanation Window at the Pulpit like the one at the said B.C.S. Meeting house. The under side of the Gallery to be ereked as pr. Plat down to the windows & doors, all the pillars pr Plat & bored through in the middle, (with out flutes) Three out side doors in front, One in the middle in two parts six feet wide & nine feet high & two each side single four feet six inches

wide & eight feet high, all the Doors & Doorways made like those in the said B.C.S. Meeting house, a frontis to the middle door pr Plat.--A partition in front to make an entry of five feet six inches in the clear across the house with a flite of stairs at each end up to the Gallerys as pr. Plat, Steps of Maple or hard pine risers spruce with a Door at the head of each.--58 Pews besides three roes of pews round the front of the Gallery oppoide the pulpit for singers to be finished like the lower ones and placed pr. plat with $\angle 7 \frac{1}{2}$. Seats to be raised and placed in each corner back of the singers Pews and round the Doors for Blacks made in the conveante form. The front of the Gallery to be finished like the one at the said B.C.S. Meeting House except plain details instead of braid details & two thirds banister three inches worked instead of all $\angle 7 \frac{1}{2}$, the top cornish set $\angle 7 \frac{1}{2}$ out forword. Over head of the Gallerys to be erecked as pr. Plat to strike all the Pillars. Each front corner to be rounded off from the Gallery to the roof, or Door, a flight of stairs & a Scuttle at each, the scuttles to be tinned and made like those on the store of B. Hoppin & Sons. The roof to be flat & finished like said Hoppins Store the bonds first nailed on to be full inch of chestnut or Oak, a passage through the roof in to the Dome on the inside & a Scuttle. A railing round the roof like the Washington Insurance Office only larger, banister of a different figure & at least four inches worked and the remainder in that proportion with ten Posts on each side, and six at the back end besides the corner with $\angle 7 \frac{1}{2}$ on each and in front pr. Plat. A Projection in front pr. Plat Pillars bored through the middle A walk of composition like the roof and nailing pr. plat between the Pillars. A Dome on the house pr. Plat the Base ten feet in height & thirty three feet diameter with four windows of sixteen lights, 12 by ten glass & one door a double floor on the inside, outside of the base boarded & clapboarded (or covered with boards halved) the top of the Dome to be boarded up and down to a joint plained smooth on the out side clear of $\angle 7 \frac{1}{2}$. A Cupelow on the top pr. Plat the top to be covered like the Dome except double tim to be put on & soldered in etc. of the cou side board, Vane, Balls, Lightening Rod & Bell by takeing the old ones the Bell to be hung compleat for ringing and toaling, a flite of stairs up through the Dome to the Bell with a composition roof under the Bell & With a Scuttle like the other roof & Scuttles. Plank steps in front as pr. Plat all the Doors to be hung with as substantial hinges & with all other fastenings as they have in the said B.C.S. Meeting house, seven locks suitable for the Doors where they are to be put. Double tinn leaders down from the troughs to receive the water at each corner raised with wood

ten feet up the troughs to be stout and a cornish moulding on the outside. The House inside and out with the steps to be painted twice over in all parts (except the seats in the Vestry & floors generally) with the best of paints & Oil, & colours agreeable to the said B.C.S. Meeting House with the numbers of the Pews painted on them.

The Frain to be of the best Materials agreeable to sort and size particularized in an Invoice signed by said James Aborn, and fraims agreeable to Plat as far as it is platted the brases & girts let in with a sholder & tenant and the remainder sufficiently strong for a Meeting house. Iron work surficiant for the frain, Walls, Roof & all parts of the Building with Roof to the door. All the pine on the outside of the house to be entirely clean of sap. The Doors, Doorways, Floors of the Isles, Pews above the seats, Pulpit, front of the Gallery and in all sightly places entirely clear of nots and all the pine work to be well seasoned. And the said James Aborn and Edward Aborn further agree promise and contract that he the said James Aborn will well and faithfully find and provide all the materials for completing and finishing said house (except as above excepted) and do and perform all the labour for completing & finishing the same (except as above excepted) although the necessary articles & Labour thereof may not be fully mentioned and described by this agreement & that he shall and will well and faithfully finish said house in all parts and agree that the Materials shall be as good & work done as well as in the said Benivillent Congregational Societys Meeting House (except as to the Masons work & Materials as before excepted) by the first day of November next without any further or other compensation than is herein & hereby secured to him. And the said Society on their part in consideration of the promises agree contract and promise with and to the said James Aborn and Edward Aborn that they will well and truly pay to him the said James Aborn the sum of seven Thousand seven hundred & Fifty Dollars in manner following to wit Two thousand One hundred & Thirty Dollars on the first day of April next, One Thousand Dollars on the tenth day of June next, One Thousand Two hundred Dollars on the fifteenth Day of August next, One Thousand Dollars on the Twentyeth day of October next and the remainder being Two Thousand four hundred & Twenty Dollars in four Months after the house is completed & finished.

And the said Society as a further consideration afore-said do hereby sell and convey to him the said James Aborn as a further consideration their old Meeting house now standing on the lot on which their said new meeting house is to be erected which the said James Aborn is to take down and remove off on or before the first day of April next. The said Society however reserving to themselves the Bell, Lightening rods, Vane, Window

Blinds, Candle sticks, Balls, Stove and pipe all of which except the Window Blinds are to be taken down by the said James Aborn and placed in the New House. And it is further agreed that if any dispute on misunderstanding shall arise between the said James Aborn and said Society's committee relative to the above agreement the same shall be settled and adjusted by three indifferent persons to be mutually chosen by the parties whose award and determination shall be final and conclusive between the parties. The Plats referred to were drawn By Mr. Barnard Eddy and by him to be explained. In Witness whereof the said James Aborn & Edward Aborn and said Society by their Committee have herewith set their hands on the day and year **first** aforesaid.

James Aborn
Edward Aborn

The Beneficent Congregational Society in Providence by their Committee: Daniel Field; Walter Paine; Elisha Dyer; A. Billings; Daniel Prood; Charles Dyer; Benj. Aborn; Stephen Waterman; John Peck; Cyrus Butler, Ben Hoppin; Amos Warner; Ephm. Talbot; Joseph S. Martin; Thomas Rhodes; Ja. U. Arnold.

Witnesses to the signing of James Aborn; Alphas Billings, Daniel Prood, Charles Dyer, Benj. Hoppin Jr., Benj. Aborn, Stephen Waterman, John Peck, Cyrus Butler, Amos Warner, Ephm. Waterman, John Peck, Cyrus Butler, Amos Warner, Ephm. Talbot, Joseph S. Martin, Thomas Rhodes & Ja. U. Arnold.

Witness to the signing of Edward Aborn: Nathan Truman, John Besely, Robert Taylor, Michael G. C. Bates.

And we the above named committee in our private capacity in consideration of the said James Aborn's having entered into the foregoing contract with said Society hereby promise him the said James Aborn that we will cause the above contract and agreement to be fully and completely carried into effect by said Society according to the tenor and effect thereof.

Providence March 7th A.D. 1809

Signed in presence of: Daniel Field; Walter Paine; Elisha Dyer, A. Billings; Daniel Prood; Ja. U. Arnold; Thomas Rhodes; Charles Dyer; Benj. Aborn; Stephen Waterman; John Peck; Ben. Hoppin; Cyrus Butler; Amos Warner; Ephm. Talbot; Joseph S. Martin.

Witnesss to the signing of Alphonse Billings,
Daniel Prood, James U. Arnold, Thomas Rhodes, Charles
Dyer, Benj. Aborn, Stephen Waterman, John Peck, Benj.
Hoppin, Jr., Cyrus Butler, Amos Warner, Eohn. Falbot
& Joseph S. Martin.

Michael G.C. Bates

Robert Taylor

b. Contract with James Aborn, June 8, 1809

These Articles of Agreement made and entered into the
Eighth day of June A.D. 1809 by and between James Aborn
of Providence in the County of Providence Merchant of
the one part and Beneficent Society in said Providence
on the other part in addition or alteration in part of
an agreement entered into by the said Parties on the
Seventh day of March A.D. 1809 for the Building and
Meeting House for said Society--Witnesseth that the
said James Aborn agrees on his part to find the Materials
make and put on a Wooden Tr on said House like the one
on the Benevolent Society's Meeting House, One round
Window finished complete with the Glass & in the Pro-
jection agreeable to the Plat drawn by Numan the pro-
jection to be four feet eight inches out instead of three.
A Hiped Roof agreeable to the plat drawn by said Numan
Shingled in the best manner with the Best of Connecticut
Shingles in the lieu of the Platt Composition roof in
the former agreement. The Windows in the Dome to be of
Twenty four lites instead of sixteen as in the former
agreement with springs to the lower sash. The two flite
of stairs from the Gallery to the inside of the Dome,
instead of their going on the roof as in the former
agreement. A rowe of Ballasters with the Railing on the
top of the back of the second rows of Pews in seats for
Singers and a stair in the center of the arch like the
one in the Baptist Meeting House in the lieu of the
third rowe of Pews on Seats for Singers as in the
former agreement. The wood work in this agreement to
be painted as in the former agreement except the Shingles
on the Roof. And the said Society agree on their part
that the said Aborn may put a pine round railing on
the pews in lieu of the Bench as in the former agree-
ment & in lieu of the Ballast rail over the Projection,
to be agreeable to the draft Drawn by Numan. The out-
side door, inside Door Entry & stairs at the South end
of said House in the Lower part, Iron work for 2 four
Tin leaders, Trough round the roof, two Scuttles on the
roof, the door on the outside of the Dome agreeable to
the former agreement to be given up to said Aborn. The
Dome Shingles in the best Manner with the best of said
Shingles, plained jointed and painted white twice over
with the best of Paint & Oil in lieu of covering of said

Dome in the former agreement. The Cupelow over the Bell to be eight square in lieu of round as by the former agreement and the top made by the Plat Drawn by Human. The base of the Dome eight square instead of round with Eaves on the Corners and Thirty-five feet diameter at the sides. And further the said Society agree to pay the said James Aborn in addition to the former agreement for the consideration of Alterations as above described Three Hundred and Eighteen Dollars in three months after the house is completed and finished.

In Witness whereof the said James Aborn and said Society by their Committee have hereunto set their hands on the day and year first aforesaid.

Signed in Presence of: James Aborn, Amos Warner, Daniel Bread, Charles Dyer, Ephm. Talbot, Stephen Waterman, Benj. Aborn, Thomas Rhodes, Cyrus Butler, Elisha Dyer, Ben. Hoppin, Walter Paine, A. Billings, Joseph L. Martin, John Peck, Daniel Field, Ja. U. Arnold.

An Addition to the foregoing addition of a former Agreement the said James Aborn agrees to make the four Pillers in front of said house two feet through cased of Plank well seasoned clean of sap and painted as in the former agreement in the Lieu of the 7 over in the other agreement for the consideration as follows that is to say that the said Society agrees to give up to the said Aborn the boaring of the Eight large Pillers in side of the house and pay said Aborn in addition for the above alteration Twenty eight Dollars.

Witness-----James Aborn
Ja. U. Arnold, Agent

7 Note: This was really two contracts. Inside changes call for \$318. Outside page additioned \$28.7.

c. Financial records relating to the erection of the building

SCHEDULE NO. 3

1809

		Discount on payment of Notes 1 pc. pd. recd. before payable	Paid for Old House	Paid for New House
Nov.25	Paid Dunham & Hawkins bill Advertising proposels-----	---	---	1.--
Nov.30	Paid Daniel Anthoney's "Surveying Lot--	---	---	1.--
Dec.1	Paid Henry Hicks bill for Work-----	---	---	0.34

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		Discount etc.	Paid for Old House	Paid for New House
Dec.7	Paid Henry Gifford bill for Work-----	---	---	1.00
	" Asa & Smith Bosworth for a tricet to his men -----	---	---	6.00
14	" John R. Carpenter for 3 pr Quality binding-----	.17	60.00	1.38
14	" L.Hamlen bill for Stove Pipe-----	---	---	2.66
	" H.Willards bill for Iron Work -----	---	---	7.50
25	" B. Luther " " Pending Sale Pews --	---	---	1.63
	" for 1 Broom-----	---	---	.17
29	" Josiah Reins bill for Balls Etc-----	--	---	27.79
	" for Wire for Stove Pipe-----	--	---	.42
	" " Candles & Paper for Plats etc-----	--	---	1.00
30	" John Carters bill for printing Anthems-----	---	---	4.--
1810				
Jan.9	" John Barton Jr. for Old Pew-----	---	4.--	---
	" Zebh. Farnum " " " -----	---	33.00	---
	" John F. Greene " " " -----	---	30.50	---
11	" John Bexely for Creying sale Pews--	---	---	1.50
	" J. Searle & A.Williams for old pew--	---	30.00	---
	" Mathewson Williams for 1/2 pew-----	---	19.50	---
	" Daniel Snow bill for Fixing Bell & Cushing bon -----	---	---	1.58
	" Jones & Wheeler bill for printing Blank Notes-----	---	---	3.--
25	" James Aborns bill Contract for building house-----	---	---	8296.75
27	" Dunham & Hawkins Bill printing blanks etc-----	---	---	9.--
31	" Seth Hunt Jr. for Pew-----	---	28.--	---
Feb.3	" Peter Grinell & Son's bill for Guilding Balls etc.-----	---	---	22.50
	" Phinehas Potter for his Pews & Wm Smith-----	---	77.--	---
	" Wm. D. Snow's bill for making step in Pulpit-----	---	---	.75
6	" J. Cooke for 48 yds Greene Cord-----	---	---	1.35
	" Knight Dexter for his Pew-----	---	43.--	---
8	" Oliver Kindall for Col. B. Tallmans pew-----	---	35.--	---
9	" Peter Mitchel for Pew-----	---	30.--	---
13	" John Partin for his Mothers 1/2 Pew	---	17.50	---
	" Abigail Chase for Pew-----	---	12.--	---
	" Ary Clemence " " -----	---	28.--	---
23	" Joseph G. Snow's bill for trimming Doors-----	---	---	.33

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		Discount etc.	Paid for Old House	Paid for New House
Feb.27	Paid Wm. Crapon for Wm. Bosworth's 1/2 pew -----	---	19.00	---
	" Elisha Dyer's 2 Bills, Pew & Discount-----	4.07	42.00	17.12
28	" John R. Pitman for his Pew-----	---	25.---	---
	" Obadiah Brown Esq. for his pew	---	42.---	---
	" James Aborn his 1/2 pew-----	---	22.50	---
	" Jones & Wheeler Advertising sales pews-----	---	---	1.---
	" James Aborn on Treasurers Note given him-----	---	---	1661.87
Mar.1	" Samuel James for Pew-----	---	50.---	---
3	" Wm. Field 3rd, for Pew-----	---	12.00	---
6	" Wm. Field's 2d bill Pew & Discount-----	.20	18.37	8.22
13	" Wm. H. Smith 2d for Wm. Black's 1/2 pew-----	---	17.50	---
	Amts. Card. up-----	\$4.44	695.87	10080.86
	Amts. Brod. up-----	4.44	695.87	10080.86
Mar.17	Paid N. Taylor for 1/2 pew-----	---	15.---	---
20	" Benj. Talbot for pew-----	---	39.---	---
24	" Asa & Smith Bosworth's bill for Contract etc.-----	---	---	6448.74
27	" Sarah Westcott for 1/16 pew----	---	1.88	---
28	" Freelove Field " " "-----	---	1.88	---
29	" Sarah Field " " "-----	---	1.88	---
30	" Rebecca Field " " "-----	---	1.88	---
	" Betsey Prantise " " "-----	---	1.88	---
Apr.7	" Rebecca Peck for her pew-----	---	25.00	---
10	" Kinsley Carpenter for pew-----	---	25.---	---
16	" John R. Carpenter for 5 yds Ribbon div. E. Talbot-----	---	---	1.25
20	" Benjamin Field for 1/16 pew-----	---	1.88	---
21	" Mary Box " " "-----	---	1.88	---
28	" Wm. Field 2 " Bill for Window Ornaments-----	---	---	35.---
30	" J & J. Peck for 1 m Tacks-----	---	---	.25
	" John Bexely for () sale Pews	---	---	.75
May 11	" Jabez Olney for 1/2 pew-----	---	25.00	---
12	" Mason Bassett's bill painting for lites etc.-----	---	---	39.---
17	" Mehatabet Ingraine for 1/16 pew----	---	1.88	---
18	" Erek Aldrich for Pew-----	---	50.---	---
	" James U. Arnold to overseeing building house-----	---	---	300.---

BENEFICENT CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
HABS No. RI-210 (Page 15)

		Discount etc.	Paid for Old House	Paid for New House
May 22	Pd 1/5 Peter Grinnell & Son's bill No. of pews-----	----	---	4.12
26 "	" 2 Corn Brooms-----	----	---	.50
June 11	" Wm. Bradford's bill to B&C.Dyer	----	---	22.01
25 "	" James Aborn Bal. treasurer's Note given him after Discount & Interest	----	---	319.83
	" James Aborn bill Window Cassings &tc.-----	----	---	41.00
30 "	" Eben. Johnson's bill candle sticks &tc.-----	----	---	4.99
July 2	" Bannard Eddy's Bill for Drafting &tc.	----	---	50.--
3 "	" Joseph Rawson's bill for stand in Pulpit-----	----	---	3.21
18 "	" Taylor & Talbots " " Trimming Pulpit &tc.-----	----	---	112.--
Aug. 14	" Daniel Field's Bill Pew &tc.-----	3.27	42.50	2.50
27 "	" Sam. Clark's bill for Painting (____)	----	---	25.98
Sept. 17	" for 1 Floor & 1 Hand Brush-----	----	---	1.22
	" James U. Arnold for Lettering with the purchasers of Pews & delivering bills Sales & paying the owners of old Pews &tc.&tc.-----	----	---	50.--
	" Note to Washington Insurance Office at Exchange Bank for Insurance of house against Fire whilst building-----	----	---	90.--
Amt. of 1 pc. Ct. Discount for Promp pay		53.79		
" for Money hired & Interest brot from Schedule No. 2.		10616.99		
Money hired brot from Schedule No. 1-		10218.--		
Amt. Interest paid		398.99	398.99	
Amt. Interest & Discount in building-----		452.78		
Deduct Amt. Discount on Orders for Aborn's & Bosworth's taken up before payable brot from Schedule No. 6--		65.76		
		387.02		
Balance Interest & Discounts paid whilst building house -----				387.02
Amt. paid for Pews in old house car'd to General a/c-----			2890.24	
Amt. paid for New House including all expenses car'd to General a/c				\$18079.25

2. Documents relating to the 1836 alterations of the building.

- a. Minutes of the Beneficent Society meetings: The following notes are extracted from: Society Records, Jan'y. 1815-Mch. 1854, of Secretary (Manuscript minutes of Beneficent Society meetings, kept at the church).

p. 128, April 13, 1835

"...ascertain what amount may be raised...towards meeting the expense of recent suggested improvements on said House...."

p. 128, July 4, 1835

"...the sum of \$2500 might be obtained by assessment on the Pews and by contribution to make the contemplated alterations of the Building as per plans in possession of W.C. Snow Sec'y which was estimated to cost about \$8000..."

p. 130, July 8, 1836

"...the Committee appointed on July 4, 1836 to recommend what repairs &c. is necessary to be made on the Beneficent Cong. Society Meeting House, Report. They have examined the House, and advise the erection of a new Pulpit, hard finish the walls, remove the Banisters from the Gallery and put in pannels, stop up the windows back of the Pulpit, re-model the Organ gallery, repair the front steps underpin the east side of the house with Granite where there is now rough stone, paint the outside and inside of the house White, and to make the roof tight it will be necessary to take down the Bell, which can be put in a small tower in the rear of the Meeting House, they wanto further state they have not been able to ascertain the exact expense of the aforesaid repairs but suppose it will cost about \$3000...& committee appointed with full powers to make such repairs and alterations in the Meeting House as they may deem expedient.--Voted, that the Treasurer be hereby authorized to hire from time to time such amount of money as may be necessary to meet the wants of the Committee for repairs &c.--"

p. 139, February 1, 1837

"...Noted, that the treasurer be hereby authorized to prise off let the New Pews made by the recent alterations of the House..."

p. 148, June 12, 1837

"...the Treasurer presented and read a statement of the expenses incurred by the Society for repairs, alterations &c. of the Meeting House. --A discussion then arose as to the course the Society should adopt towards liquidating their debts, which resulted in a proposition to refer the consideration of this important subject to a Special Committee..."

pp. 149-150, July 19, 1837

"...Resolved, that it be recommended to the Society to assess a tax of ten thousand dollars on the congregation steadily worshipping in their House in proportion to their individual property..."

- b. Financial records relating to the alterations: The following notes are extracted from: Society Records of the Treasurer, 1786-1882 (Manuscript financial records of the Beneficent Society, kept at the church).

pp. 101-103: Payments to J.H. & E.Martin, 1836-1838, \$7,457.77

p. 101: Payment to Tallman and Bucklin, July 20, 1837, \$198.53.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, brick church, built in 1809 with important Greek Revival alterations in 1836.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block 91' (five bays) x 75' (north front) on elevated basement, portico 45' x 8'. Later rear wing forming office and chancel, 35' deep x 40' wide. Large, adjoining parish house at southwest.
2. Foundations: Random ashlar - granite.
3. Wall construction: Brick facing on stone walls, common bond, brick 1-3/4" x 8", laid with narrow mortar joints. Slight set-back above basement story.

4. Porches: Tetrastyle Doric portico with fluted wood columns, 4' in diameter, pediment with full Doric entablature
5. Chimneys: Brick chimney at rear
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Three main entrances in portico; double, wood doors, each leaf three panels, flat sunk panels, Greek Revival moldings; horizontal top lights, simple molded frames; splayed stone lintels over two side doors, rectangular lintel over center door. Door to basement on east side of main block. Entrances on both sides of office-chancel wing at the south end of the building.
 - b. Windows: Three tiers of windows on sides, double hung windows on basement and gallery levels, triple hung on main floor, six-light sash. 13" x 18" glass size. Top sash of triple hung windows, main floor windows are blind, covered by gallery. Greek Revival wood window frames on exterior.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Low hip roof, asphalt roofing.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Wood cornice, heavy moldings, Greek Revival profiles. Solid, paneled balustrade; large, peaked center panels on each side with very large scale Greek key pattern.
 - c. Dome: Large, wood-framed dome over center of church, covered with sheet metal; octagonal drum with paneled sides, 10' high; dome 33' diameter, slightly more than a hemisphere; dome surmounted by wood copy of the choragic monument of Lysicrates in Athens.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Vestibule on north front, full width of the building with stairs to gallery at each end; main auditorium with galleries on rear and sides, single aisles separated from center of auditorium by rows of four columns on each side; deep chancel added at south end with high, center pulpit, choir and organ.
2. Stairways: U-shape stairways to gallery in vestibule, partially enclosed.

3. Flooring: Wood floors, carpeted.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster. Shallow plaster vault over main auditorium, ceilings over aisles and galleries slope up toward outside walls.
5. Doors and doorways: Later doors from vestibule to auditorium and from auditorium to offices on south side of of building. Molded, crossetted architraves on doorways.
6. Trim: Fluted Ionic columns from floor to ceiling with deep Ionic entablature. Windows have molded architraves, deep paneled jambs, louvered shutters. Elaborate, molded, carved, chancel woodwork added 1923.
7. Lighting: Electric
8. Heating: Modern central heat

D. Site

General setting and orientation: The building faces north, on sidewalk line at front; landscaped Abbott Place on east; large parking lot on west; adjoining offices and parish house on south.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
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